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APR 05 2010

Appl. No. 10/754,323
Supplemental Amdt. dated April 5, 2010
Further to our March 11, 2010 Reply to
Office action of September 29, 2009

REMARKS

Claim 13, the only independent claim in the application, has been amended to further define the invention over the prior art.

The claim now points out the function of the curved portion of the cantilevered locking latch (40) is to delay contact of the latch (40) with the side of the slot (23) when connector (21) is stabbed through the slot (23) to lock with an opposing connector (22) already in the slot (23), and to latch onto the main beam (20).

As pointed out in the specification and drawing, such curved portion of locking latch (40), with the resulting delay, permits positioning of the connector (21) vertically within the slot (23) while free from the substantial frictional forces that resist such positioning where there is early contact with the slot, as with the straight locking latch of the prior art.

The locking latch of Lickliter '957 not only does not delay contact with the slot, but on the contrary, accelerates contact with the slot. The Lickliter '957 locking latch is formed of a segment folded back on itself, so that two thicknesses of latch, sprung apart by a fold at the leading edge; must pass through the slot, with early contact by, not only one, but two thicknesses of latch.

The Sauer '379 patent cited as prior art has a locking latch that immediately contacts the side of the slot, as the latch is being inserted in the slot. The latch (finger 64) is